

**THE PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS ACT
MEANS BETTER CARE FOR WOMEN**

For women and families, few issues resonate as profoundly and pervasively as the need for quality health care. Both women and men care about health care quality, but women have a particular stake in the outcome of our nation's evolving health care system. Here is why:

- Women are the nation's primary health care decision-makers and consumers.
- Women spend most of our health care dollars.
- Women are the majority of enrollees in managed care plans.
- Women have unique health care needs that include, but go beyond, reproductive health.

The Patients' Bill of Rights Act (S. 1890, H.R. 3605) will help tip the balance back in favor of patients and their providers by establishing urgently needed common-sense patient protections. Many of the bill's provisions are especially important to women. For example, managed care plans would be required to:

- Allow women to choose an obstetrician/gynecologist as a primary care provider and to have direct access to ob-gyn services;
- Provide an external appeal when care is denied;
- Ensure access to clinical trials that may save women's lives;
- Ensure that pregnant women can continue to see the same health care provider throughout pregnancy if their provider leaves the plan or their employer changes plans;
- Allow health care professionals to prescribe drugs that are not on the plan's predetermined list when such drugs are medically indicated;
- Stop imposing arbitrary limits on how care is delivered, including an end to drive-thru mastectomies;
- Have an internal quality improvement system that measures performance on health care issues that affect women;
- Collect data on quality indicators and health outcomes on a gender-specific basis;
- Incorporate gender-specific medicine when developing the plan's written clinical review criteria; and
- Ensure that providers and patients are not discriminated against on the basis of sex or other characteristics.

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